

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Petrified Forest National Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: PEFO

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Petrified Forest National Park was established by President Theodore Roosevelt on December 8, 1906. Ninety-eight years later, President Bush signed the Petrified Forest National Park Expansion Act of 2004, which more than doubled its size to approximately 218,500 acres. Thus the park has diverse challenges regarding management of both old and new areas, including repair/modernization of infrastructure, acquisition of new lands, inventorying of resources, and planning for visitor use.

On the original lands, inventories and documentation of existing resources of all kinds are incomplete. The park should receive some help by means of an operating increase scheduled for 2008 which will add desperately needed expertise. As the authorized lands are acquired, additional inventories and documentation will be necessary in the primary resource areas of archeology, paleontology, and biology.

On the original lands, aging infrastructure creates an opportunity for rehabilitation in a manner consistent with environmental leadership - a chance to "green" the park development - while continuing to use historic structures and bring them up to modern standards.

The park currently does not have backcountry trails. To improve the diversity of recreational opportunities, the park will consider both rehabilitation of existing trails and new, perhaps longer trail opportunities on lands to be acquired.

Educational improvements proposed include a selective use of technology to reach "virtual visitors" and potentially to bring resources unavailable by remoteness or delicacy to areas of congregation. Further, the recently rehabilitated Painted Desert Inn could be better utilized as a focal point of Native demonstrations and interpretation, and a Learning Center established to bring scientific work to a variety of audiences. Community outreach will continue through a proposed Heritage Area designation in the area.

To help maintain its vitality, the park plans to provide developmental opportunities in the form of bridge positions, developmental assignments and the like, to help promising employees progress from technical to professional positions. The park will also improve its safety record by reducing the accident rate.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Acting Superintendent Bradley S. Traver

Site: PEFO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

☒ Rehabilitate high-priority historic buildings to good condition, and help communities to preserve their history through programs like Preserve America.

Petrified Forest National Park will demonstrate stewardship through the rehabilitation of historic structures and landscapes in a manner that respects historic fabric and design while adapting these spaces to modern uses and efficiencies. At the north end of the park, rehabilitation of the historic Painted Desert Community Complex, buildings and grounds of the Mission 66 era, will provide the park an opportunity to continue offering visitor services, administrative space, employee housing, and community facilities in one master-planned complex. The rehabilitation will create a showcase for the practice of sustainable strategies consistent with leadership in environmental design. At the southern end of the park, a similar opportunity exists in the rehabilitation of the Rainbow Forest Historic District, a collection of CCC era buildings and their associated grounds used for public purposes and employee housing.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Complete all cultural resource inventories for designated priority resources.

This project (PMIS 137828) to document park historic resources will allow Petrified Forest NP to complete a vitally necessary cultural resource inventory, which we are not able to address with current staff and funding levels.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

This project (PMIS 137828) will provide condition documentation which does not currently exist for historic resources outside of park developed zones. This documentation step will allow park staff to craft strategies and actions to address performance goals for "improving high priority assets to acceptable condition" as well as "rehabilitate high priority historic buildings to good condition."

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Site: PEFO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Identified decades ago as strategically important landscapes specifically for the protection of paleontological and archeological resources, Congress authorized the acquisition of an additional 125,000 acres east and west of Petrified Forest National Park in a bill made law in 2004. Over 15,000 acres of these lands have been transferred to the park from the Bureau of Land Management. The vast majority of the remaining 110,000 acres are held in four ranches and by the State of Arizona. All four ranch owners are willing to sell, although the terms under which they are willing to work with us vary. The Trust for Public Land is willing to assist in the purchases. A GMP focused on the new lands will be started in 2007. By 2016, the park proposes to have acquired a significant portion of the authorized lands and to have begun active management of them.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: PEFO

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Encourage children to be future conservationists.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

The PEFO Junior Ranger Program (PMIS #137858) should be available for no cost to children and families visiting the park. All interested children should have the opportunity to participate. This program could be expanded to include a PEFO web ranger component. The park's education program needs to be expanded, improved and aligned with State and National Education Standards.

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Site: PEFO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

☒ Reduce the environmental impacts of park operations on air and water quality.

In both park developed areas, and throughout the park where historic structures will be reused, alternative energy, water conservation, and excellence in the application of environmental design, coupled with a dedication to protection of historic resources, will reduce park energy costs, improve both public and administrative spaces, and offer an example for others to follow. The act of historic preservation in and of itself is a principle of environmental leadership.

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Site: PEFO

ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Partnerships with the City of Holbrook; counties of Navajo and Apache; Navajo Nation, Apache, Zuni and Hopi tribes will be enhanced through efforts such as the I-40 Corridor Economic Development Program, other economic development initiatives, and tourism development via the establishment of the proposed Little Colorado River Valley National Heritage area. Creation of a cultural center/tourism center on Business-40 in the town of Holbrook would provide information to tourists about the entire area. Potential financial partners include the City of Holbrook and Northland Pioneer College.

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Site: PEFO

RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

The park will improve the recreational experience for the visiting public by rehabilitating existing park trails and building new ones. The existing trails are hard surface (asphalt) that are in need of rehabilitation. They will be resurfaced with a material that is less susceptible to edge crumbling, increasing the safety of these trails. The park will also build a new trail system into the Painted Desert from historic Route 66, as recommended in existing park planning documents. Further, the park will plan and develop trail systems for accessing a portion of the additional 120,000 acres slated for acquisition in the newly expanded legislative park boundary.

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Site: PEFO

RECREATION

☒ Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Development of a comprehensive science education program at PEFO would create field experiences that many children would otherwise not ever have. Potential partners in this endeavor include Arizona State University and Earthscope. PMIS #113727 and OFS #7279A.

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

Site: PEFO

EDUCATION

☒ Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

A comprehensive science education program would be developed with partners including Arizona State University, Arizona public schools, and Earthscope to introduce children and teachers to the fields of geology, paleontology, archaeology and ecology of grassland ecosystems. Preliminary work has begun via PMIS #113727 but other funds are being sought through partners to create and sustain this program. OFS request #7279A would provide for education support.

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Site: PEFO

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Virtual park visits would be developed for both students and general park virtual visitors. These programs could provide park, wilderness, paleontology, archeaology experiences for both mobility impaired visitors as well as web site visitors. A web version of the PEFO Junior Ranger program would be developed.

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Site: PEFO

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

The PEFO Junior Ranger Program (PMIS #137858) would be made completely free of cost for all interested children and families. This program could be expanded to include both a "deputy ranger" program for adults and a web based PEFO Junior Ranger program.

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Site: PEFO

EDUCATION

☒ Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their national parks.

☒ Increase visitors' satisfaction, understanding, and appreciation of the parks they visit.

Visitor Center exhibits in 3 visitor centers would be planned, evaluated and updated to present established interpretive themes in a compelling manner. Exhibits would include interactive components and technologies to increase visitor understanding of park resources. Route 66 roadway segments, trails and exhibits would be developed and improved. The interpretation program would be expanded and improved with more offerings of scheduled tours and programs.

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Site: PEFO

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

☒ Establish a structured professional development curriculum to provide park managers with the skills to apply best business practices and superior leadership.

The park plans to provide developmental opportunities in the form of bridge positions, developmental assignments and the like, to help promising employees progress from technical to professional positions.

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Site: PEFO

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Reduce the number of employee lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

The park proposes to reduce the number of lost-time incidents and serious visitor injuries by 20 percent.

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